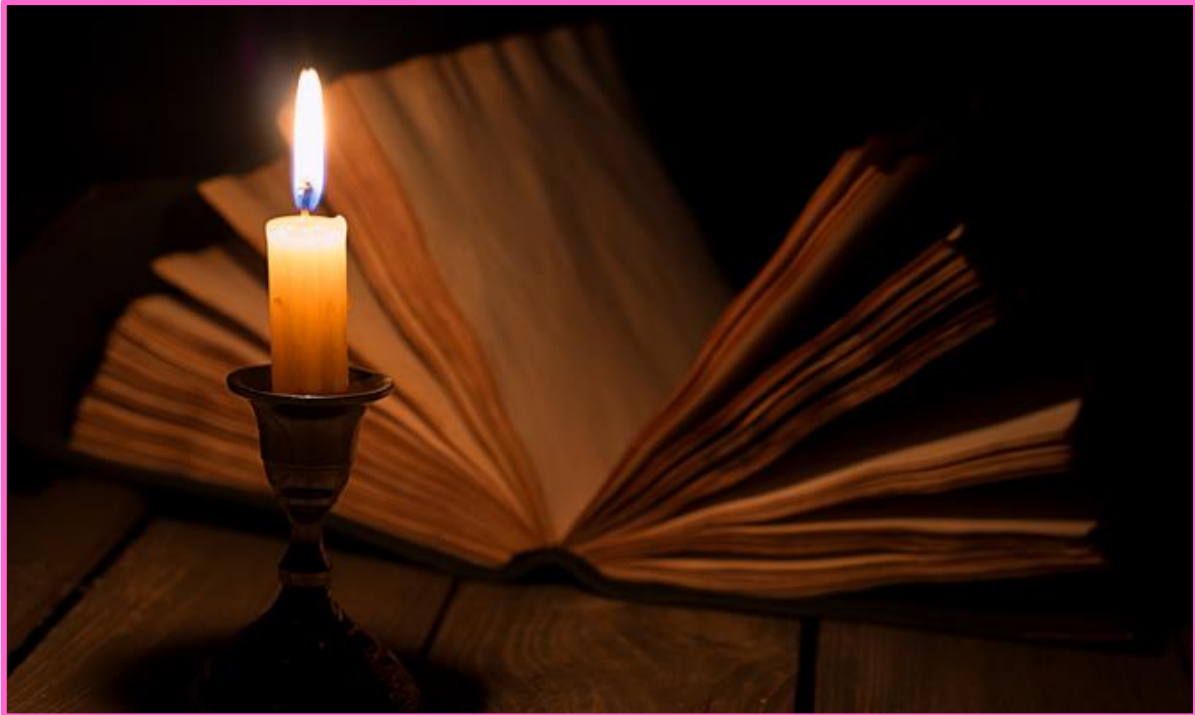


SJWMS English Literature Induction Series: Part II



Head of Department: Miss Holland

Marie.holland@sjwms.org.uk

Key Stage 5 Lead: Miss Sypliwczak

Lara.sypliwczak@sjwms.org.uk

A First Activity - The Nightmare

1. Look closely at the painting below.
2. Make brief notes on what you see, for example:
 - a. Which part attracts your attention most and why you think this is
 - b. Three or four adjectives describing the emotions it arouses in you
 - c. Any questions you want to ask of it
 - d. Connections to any films, novel, poems, or other paintings you have seen or read



What is the Gothic?

1. What do you understand by the term 'Gothic'? Mind-map your ideas and impressions and the images it conjures up for you.
2. Type 'Gothic' into a search engine. Skimming through the first two or three pages of results only, make a note of the range of different ways in which the term Gothic is being used.

In *emagazine 29* (September 2005), Professor David Punter from Bristol University said:

What is the Gothic? You might initially think of 'Goth culture' – black robes, black lips, vampire fixations, a certain type of music. Or perhaps Gothic films, which have a long history from Hammer horror through to far more recent remakes of Gothic texts like *Dracula* and *Frankenstein*. But the Gothic, in fact, has an even longer history and a broader cultural spread. Asking the questions when, where, what and why might help pin down this fascinating and long-lived cultural phenomenon.

Entries for the word *Gothic* from several dictionaries are printed below.

1. Read the definitions and consider the differences and similarities in the way it is used.
2. Write your own definition of the term 'Gothic'. As you learn more about the literary Gothic, add to or amend your definition.

Of, pertaining to, or concerned with the Goths or their language.
Formerly used in extended sense, now expressed by Teutonic or Germanic.
Belonging to, or characteristic of, the Middle Ages; mediæval, 'romantic', as opposed to classical. In early use chiefly with reprobation. Belonging to the 'dark ages'.
A term for the style of architecture prevalent in Western Europe from the twelfth to the sixteenth century, of which the chief characteristic is the pointed arch. Applied also to buildings, architectural details, and ornamentation.
Barbarous, rude, uncouth, unpolished, in bad taste. Of temper: Savage.

Oxford English Dictionary

Adjective

1. of a style of architecture used in Western Europe from the 12th to the 16th centuries, characterized by pointed arches, ribbed vaults, and flying buttresses
2. of a literary style featuring stories of gloom, horror, and the supernatural, popular in the late 18th century
3. of or in a heavy ornate script typeface

Noun

1. Gothic architecture or art

Collins Essential English Dictionary (2nd Edition 2006)

The combination Gothic romance represents a union of two of the major influences in the development of European culture, the Roman Empire and the Germanic tribes that invaded it. The Roman origins of romance must be sought in the etymology of that word, but we can see clearly that Gothic is related to the name Goth used for one of those invading Germanic tribes. The word Gothic, first recorded in 1611 in a reference to the language of the Goths, was extended in sense in several ways, meaning 'Germanic', 'medieval, not classical', 'barbarous', and also an architectural style that was not Greek or Roman. Horace Walpole applied the word Gothic to his novel *The Castle of Otranto, a Gothic Story* (1765) in the sense 'medieval, not classical'. From this novel filled with scenes of terror and gloom in a medieval setting descended a literary genre still popular today; from its subtitle descended the name for it.

The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language (4th edition ©2000, 2009)

A Gothic Montage

Some short quotations from literary texts and criticism are printed below. A selection of images are also reproduced on the following pages.

1. Look through all the quotations and images.
2. Can you make any connections between the textual fragments and the images? Annotate these with your ideas and the impressions you are building up of the Gothic as it might be applied to literature and art (for example, any common features or images).
3. Drawing on everything you have looked at (the fragments and images, the dictionary definition, your internet search, and your own ideas), put together a Gothic montage. Date your montages so you can see how your understanding changes and develops as you study the topic and your texts.

Literary quotations

I felt in my heart a wicked,
burning desire

And found no end, in
wandering mazes lost.

Every suggestion that horror
could inspire rushed into
her mind.

a foul thing is it, by my
feith,/To seye this word,
and fouler is the dede

Only to wonder at unlawful
things:

suggested even more terrors
than her reason could
justify.

for the first time in my
innocent and confined
life, I sensed in myself a
potentiality for corruption

and I foresaw obscurely
that I was destined to
become the most wretched
of human beings.

she stood for some
moments waiting a
returning gleam, but the
obscurity continued

Critical quotations

The genre is about excess
[...] excessive imagery,
excessive rhetoric,
excessive narrative, and
excessive affect.

the wild landscapes,
the ruined castles and
abbeys, the dark, dank
labyrinths, the marvellous,
supernatural events, distant
times and customs

its plots still remain
exorbitant, piling incident
upon incident for its own
sake, and its settings are
still overcharged with a
fearsome and brooding
atmosphere

this basic function of the
genre, which is to scare
its readers and viewers in
enjoyable ways

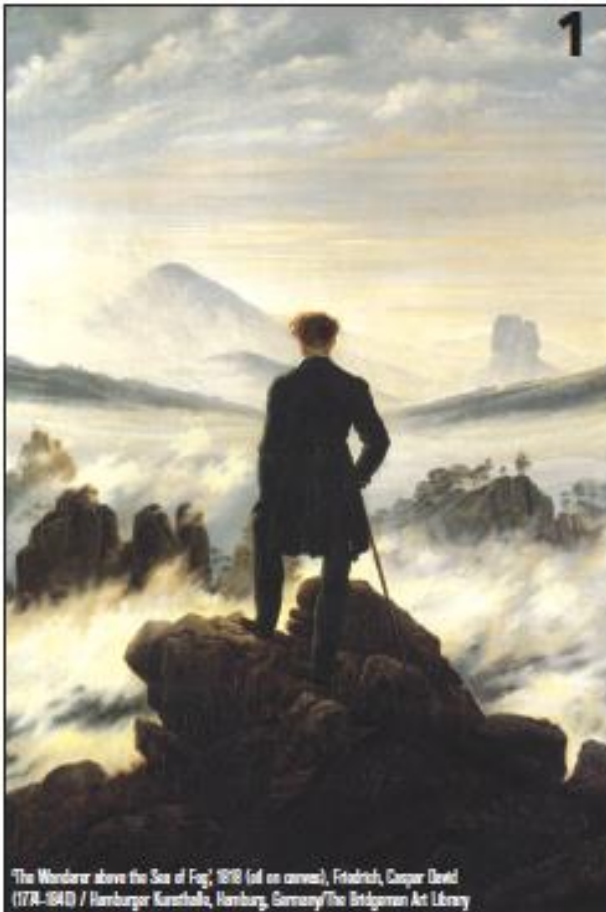
the literary Gothic has
been concerned with
uncertainties of character
positioning and instabilities
of knowledge.

Terror [...] awakens the
faculties to a high degree
of life; [Horror] contracts,
freezes and nearly
annihilates them

thus ghosts and hauntings
are figures arising from our
psychological past, figures
of fear that we thought we
had banished but which
continue to live on inside
us.

Where the classical was
well ordered, the Gothic
was chaotic; [...] where
the classics offered a world
of clear rules and limits,
Gothic represented excess
and exaggeration

a popular rather than a
'high' genre; [...] a popular
genre, the first developed
for a modern mass-market;
its authors and readers are
more likely to be women
than men.

1

'The Wanderer above the Sea of Fog', 1818 (oil on canvas), Friedrich Casper David (1774-1841) / Hamburger Kunsthalle, Hamburg, Germany/The Bridgeman Art Library

2

Whore Ryder/ Gary Oldman in Brian Stiller's Dracula & Francis Ford Coppola, 1992, Credit: Zentropo/Columbia Tri-Star/The Kintal Collection

3

Paradise Lost, Illustrated by Gustave Doré

4



Fide Film Ab/The Kobal Collection for Lisa Lundström in *Let Den Rätta Kärnan* by J. Thomas Alfvén, 2008



Ture of the Scow

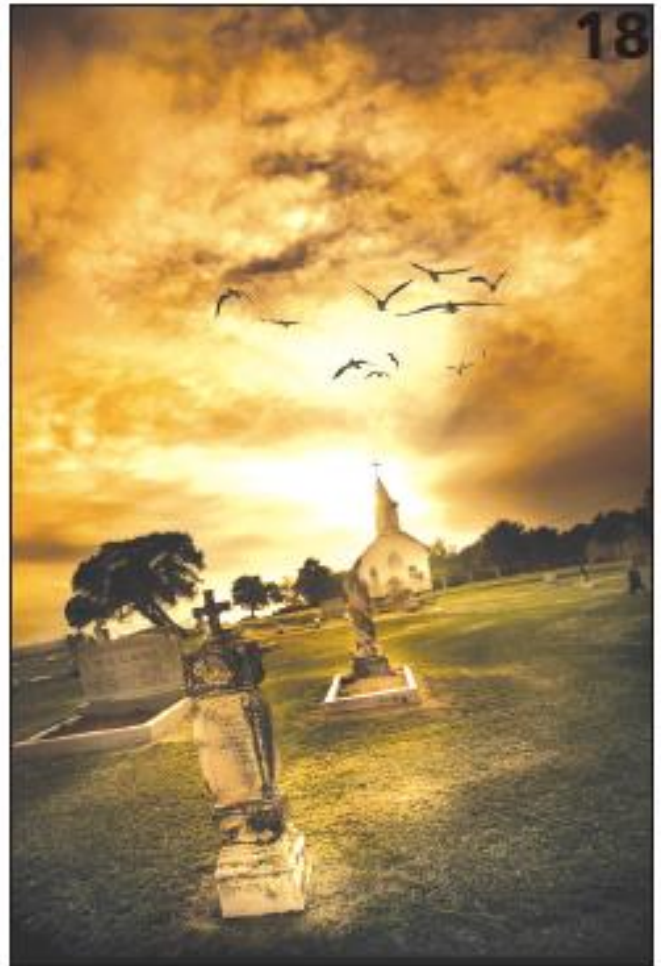


Insurgent for Twilight



Iron Mary Skolay's *Frankenstein* (L. Harold Brown, 1954) courtesy of Imaginart





21



Film still from *Nostalgia* courtesy of BFI stills

22



Film still from *Nostalgia* courtesy of BFI stills

23



Northern Stage production of Angela Carter's
The Bloody Chamber Credit: Kath Pettman

24



Channel 4 extranet press site for
Dead Set

25



The Kabel Collection/20th Century Fox Television/Carteret, Inc., Borealis, Inc., Waco
Metzall and Sarah Michelle Gellar in Buffy the Vampire Slayer, 1997

26

Every night
he rises from
his coffin-bed
to silently
seek
the
soft
flesh,
the warm
blood
he needs
to keep
himself
alive!



Valerie Gaunt and John Van Eyssen in Dracula d. Terence Fisher
(1958) Credit: Hammer/The Kabel Collection

Rebecca, by Daphne DuMaurier

Read the extract (see last two pages of this document) from DuMaurier's *Rebecca*.

Look for and annotate any of the following Gothic features:

1. Abbeys/monasteries
2. Absent mothers
3. Ancestral curses
4. Archaisms (language/beliefs)
5. Blood
6. Castles
7. Catholic or feudal society
8. Concealment
9. Chests
10. Corruption
11. Counts/Lords
12. Crypts, cloisters, and catacombs
13. Death
14. Documents
15. Doppelganger/double/evil familiar
16. Dreams
17. Dungeons
18. Embedded narratives (journals/diaries etc),
tales within tales and framing devices
19. Escape/escape denied
20. Flickering Candles
21. Forbidden knowledge
22. Forests
23. Ghosts
24. Hauntings
25. Housekeepers
26. Hyperbolic language
27. Imprisonment
28. Incest
29. Insanity
30. Isolation
31. Justice/failure/absence of justice
32. Labyrinths
33. Masks and helmets
34. Mirrors
35. Monks/religious figures
36. Monsters
37. Moonlight
38. Mountains
39. Multiple narrative voices
40. Mutilations
41. Mystery
42. Obscurity/things hinted at
43. Omens
44. Oppression
45. Orphans
46. Persecution
47. Poisonings
48. Portraits
49. Pursued maidens
50. Pursuit/the chase
51. Religion
52. Revenge
53. Ruins
54. Secrets
55. Secret panels
56. Sensational or shocking events
57. Sex
58. Silence
59. Storms
60. Threat (anticipated, perceived, or real)
61. Torture
62. Trespass
63. Underground passages
64. Vampires
65. Villains
66. Violation
67. Violence
68. Wild/remote landscapes
69. Wills
70. Wind
71. Women - young, vulnerable, alone
72. Women - young, curious, and independent
73. Women - seductresses and corrupters

Gothic Concepts

1. Try to identify which Gothic concepts (from those detailed below) are more important to *Rebecca*.
2. For one of the concepts (for example terror or the sublime), select a short extract from one of the core texts which you think demonstrates this concept in action.
3. Annotate your short extract with the features which the writer is using to explore this concept. You could present this as a poster to display on the wall.

Horror and Terror

Terror can be defined as fear generated through what is uncertain or obscure, shadowy or insubstantial, a perceived or anticipated threat preying on the imagination. Horror, on the other hand, is fear generated by a physical shock actually seen or experienced.

The feminist critic Julia Kristeva has coined the term 'abject' (meaning 'cast off' or 'cast away') to refer to all that is 'in-between ... ambiguous ... composite' that breaks down the distinction between subject and object or self and other and creates a human reaction of horror. She argues that the corpse is the most obvious example of something which is 'abject' but other physical aspects of life (open wounds, faeces, even the skin that forms on warm milk) can produce the same sort of horrified revulsion.

The Sublime

A sense of awe, astonishment, of being overwhelmed in the face of something much bigger than ourselves, whether a landscape, power, an awareness of vastness, infinity, difficulty or magnificence or an emotion (such as terror). The sublime depends on obscurity - we are unable fully to see the landscape or fully comprehend the experience.

The 18th-century writer Edmund Burke wrote in 1757, 'Whatever is fitted in any sort to excite the ideas of pain, and danger, that is to say, whatever is in any sort terrible, or is conversant about terrible objects, or operates in a manner analogous to terror, is a source of the sublime; that is, it is productive of the strongest emotion which the mind is capable of feeling'. At the end of the century Hugh Blair (1796) wrote that the sublime, 'produces a sort of internal evaluation and expansion of the mind above its ordinary state, and fills it with a degree of wonder and astonishment which it cannot well express.'

The Uncanny

The strange, eerie or mysterious. In Freudian terms the uncanny (*unheimlich*) is that which is both foreign or strange yet is at the same time also familiar, producing a peculiarly unsettling experience.

Taboos

Cultural, moral or religious rules which are put under pressure or violated (for example, incest, murder), challenging limits or norms.

The Supernatural or Preternatural

What is above nature, mysterious, inexplicable.

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Last night I dreamed I went to Manderley again. It seemed to me I stood by the iron gate leading to the drive, and for a while I could not enter, for the way was barred to me. There was a padlock and a chain upon the gate. I called in my dream to the lodge keeper, and had no answer, and peering closer through the rusted spokes of the gate I saw that the lodge was uninhabited.

No smoke came from the chimney, and the little lattice windows gaped forlorn. Then, like all dreamers, I was possessed of a sudden with supernatural powers and passed like a spirit through the barrier before me. The drive wound away in front of me, twisting and turning as it had always done, but as I advanced I was aware that a change had come upon it; it was narrow and unkept, not the drive that we had known. At first I was puzzled and did not understand, and it was only when I bent my head to avoid the low swinging branch of a tree that I realized what had happened. Nature had come into her own again and, little by little, in her stealthy, insidious way had encroached upon the drive with long, tenacious fingers. The woods, always a menace even in the past, had triumphed in the end. They crowded, dark and uncontrolled, to the borders of the drive. The beeches with white, naked limbs leaned close to one another, their branches intermingled in a strange embrace, making a vault above my head like the archway of a church. And there were other trees as well, trees that I did not recognize, squat oaks and tortured elms that straggled cheek by jowl with the beeches, and had thrust themselves out of the quiet earth, along with monster shrubs and plants, none of which I remembered.

The drive was a ribbon now, a thread of its former self, with gravel surface gone, and choked with grass and moss. The trees had thrown out low branches, making an impediment to progress; the gnarled roots looked like skeleton claws. Scattered here and again among this jungle growth I would recognize shrubs that had been landmarks in our time, things of culture and grace, hydrangeas whose blue heads had been famous. No hand had checked their progress, and they had gone native now, rearing to monster height without a bloom, black and ugly as the nameless parasites that grew beside them.

On and on, now east now west, wound the poor thread that once had been our drive. Sometimes I thought it lost, but it appeared again, beneath a fallen tree perhaps, or struggling on the other side of a muddied ditch created by the winter rains. I had not thought the way so long. Surely the miles had multiplied, even as the trees had done, and this path led but to a labyrinth, some choked wilderness, and not to the house at all. I came upon it suddenly; the approach masked by the unnatural growth of a vast shrub that spread in all directions, and I stood, my heart thumping in my breast, the strange prick of tears behind my eyes.

There was Manderley, our Manderley, secretive and silent as it had always been, the gray stone shining in the moonlight of my dream, the mullioned windows reflecting the green lawns and the terrace. Time could not wreck the perfect symmetry of those walls, nor the site itself, a jewel in the hollow of a hand.

The terrace sloped to the lawns, and the lawns stretched to the sea, and turning I could see the sheet of silver placid under the moon, like a lake undisturbed by wind or storm. No waves would come to ruffle this dream water, and no bulk of cloud, wind-driven from the west, obscure the clarity of this pale sky. I turned again to the house, and though it stood inviolate, untouched, as though we ourselves had left but yesterday, I saw that the garden had obeyed the jungle law, even as the woods had done. The rhododendrons stood fifty feet high, twisted and entwined with bracken, and they had entered into alien marriage with a host of nameless shrubs, poor, bastard things that clung about

their roots as though conscious of their spurious origin. A lilac had mated with a copper beech, and to bind them yet more closely to one another the malevolent ivy, always an enemy to grace, had thrown her tendrils about the pair and made them prisoners. Ivy held prior place in this lost garden, the long strands crept across the lawns, and soon would encroach upon the house itself. There was another plant too, some half-breed from the woods, whose seed had been scattered long ago beneath the trees and then forgotten, and now, marching in unison with the ivy, thrust its ugly form like a giant rhubarb towards the soft grass where the daffodils had blown.

Nettles were everywhere, the vanguard of the army. They choked the terrace, they sprawled about the paths, they leaned, vulgar and lanky, against the very windows of the house. They made indifferent sentinels, for in many places their ranks had been broken by the rhubarb plant, and they lay with crumpled heads and listless stems, making a pathway for the rabbits. I left the drive and went onto the terrace, for the nettles were no barrier to me, a dreamer. I walked enchanted, and nothing held me back.

Moonlight can play odd tricks upon the fancy, even upon a dreamer's fancy. As I stood there, hushed and still, I could swear that the house was not an empty shell but lived and breathed as it had lived before.

Light came from the windows, the curtains blew softly in the night air, and there, in the library, the door would stand half open as we had left it, with my handkerchief on the table beside the bowl of autumn roses.

The room would bear witness to our presence. The little heap of library books marked ready to return, and the discarded copy of *The Times*. Ashtrays, with the stub of a cigarette; cushions, with the imprint of our heads upon them, lolling in the chairs; the charred embers of our log fire still smoldering against the morning. And Jasper, dear Jasper, with his soulful eyes and great, sagging jowl, would be stretched upon the floor, his tail a-thump when he heard his master's footsteps.

A cloud, hitherto unseen, came upon the moon, and hovered an instant like a dark hand before a face. The illusion went with it, and the lights in the windows were extinguished. I looked upon a desolate shell, soulless at last, unhaunted, with no whisper of the past about its staring walls.

The house was a sepulcher, our fear and suffering lay buried in the ruins. There would be no resurrection. When I thought of Manderley in my waking hours I would not be bitter. I should think of it as it might have been, could I have lived there without fear. I should remember the rose garden in summer, and the birds that sang at dawn. Tea under the chestnut tree, and the murmur of the sea coming up to us from the lawns below.

I would think of the blown lilac, and the Happy Valley. These things were permanent, they could not be dissolved. They were memories that cannot hurt. All this I resolved in my dream, while the clouds lay across the face of the moon, for like most sleepers I knew that I dreamed. In reality I lay many hundred miles away in an alien land, and would wake, before many seconds had passed, in the bare little hotel bedroom, comforting in its very lack of atmosphere. I would sigh a moment, stretch myself and turn, and opening my eyes, be bewildered at that glittering sun, that hard, clean sky, so different from the soft moonlight of my dream. The day would lie before us both, long no doubt, and uneventful, but fraught with a certain stillness, a dear tranquility we had not known before. We would not talk of Manderley, I would not tell my dream. For Manderley was ours no longer. Manderley was no more.